

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application.

In a final Office Action dated September 2, 2003 (the "Office Action"), the Examiner: (1) rejected Claims 1, 2, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,200,151 (the "Long reference"); (2) rejected Claims 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 14, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,084,730 (the "Franke reference"); and (3) objected to Claims 4-6, 9-12, 15 and 17 as being dependent on a rejected base Claim. The Examiner noted that Claims 4-6, 9-12, 15 and 17 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Office Action Pg. 3.

In this response, the Applicant: (1) cancels claims 3, 4, 8, 9 and 17; (2) respectfully submits amendments to Claims 1, 7 and 16, which re-write claims 4, 9 and 17 in independent form and thereby overcome the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10-16 and 18; and (3) respectfully adds new claims 19-23. Applicant respectfully submits that ample support may be found in the Applicant's specification for new claims 19-23.

Altogether, Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10-16 and 18 remain in the application and are pending along with new claims 19-23 after the amendments. Claims 3, 4, 8, 9 and 17 are canceled.

II. Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10-16 and 18 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Should Be Withdrawn.

In the January 16, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner noted that Claims 4-6, 9-12, 15 and 17 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." As set forth above, claims 4, 9 and 17 have each been re-written in independent form as claims 1, 7, and 16, and are therefore allowable. In addition, claims 2, 5, 6, 10-15 and 18 depend from and incorporate all the limitations of allowable claims 1, 7 and 16 and are also allowable.

III. Conclusion

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the Applicant has made a patentable contribution to the art and that this response places the above identified application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application, including allowance of new claims 19-23, is respectfully requested.

Commissioner for Patents
April 16, 2004
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In the event the Applicant has inadvertently overlooked the need for an extension of time or payment of an additional fee, the Applicant conditionally petitions therefor, and authorizes any fee deficiency to be charged to deposit account 09-0007.

Sincerely,

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